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MINISTER KILLEEN ACKNOWLEDGES A FAIR DEAL FOR MIDWEST'S NURSING HOME PATIENTS

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IRELAND, 30th July 07 - Minister for State and Clare T.D., Mr. Tony Killeen T.D., said that the proposed new nursing home care support scheme - A FAIR DEAL - will dramatically change the way in which people in the Midwest access and pay for long-term care.

The legislation, which is due to be introduced on January 1st 2008, aims to remedy the inequities that exist in the current scheme.

“At the moment, the one person in twenty who needs long-term care encounters an unpredictable and unfair system that turns the issue of going into a nursing home into a trauma for them and for their family. Under the scheme in place since 1993, older people are anxious they will lose their home or be put under pressure to sell it”, stated Minister Killeen.

He indicated that people who need care face greatly different costs, depending on whether they are in public or private nursing homes.

“Individuals in public care currently pay fees based on a flat rate regardless of their wealth. In contrast, State support for people in private care is based on means testing. Many people in private nursing homes get no support. However, the new nursing home care support scheme will guarantee such care is accessible, affordable and anxiety-free”, Minister Killeen explained.

He continued, “A FAIR DEAL will ensure that the State continues to fund the largest part of care costs overall. In addition to this, contributions during a person’s life will be less than their disposable income, whether for public or private nursing home care. Furthermore, a person’s family will not have to contribute towards the cost of their care.”

“The improved scheme will apply to all new entrants to public and private nursing homes, who are assessed as needing residential care, from 1st January next. It will also be available to existing residents of private nursing homes should they wish to avail of it”, Minister Killeen stated.

In response to a representation by Minister Killeen, the Minister for Health and Children explained, “Anyone already in a public nursing home will continue to contribute only the public charge during the duration of their stay in care. It is very important that no person currently in care will be disadvantaged in any way by the new scheme.”

Meanwhile, Minister Killeen has advised members of the public to discover more about the benefits outlined under the proposed legislation before its scheduled introduction.

He said that information on A FAIR DEAL was readily available from the Department of Health and Children, as well as the various Citizens Information Centres around the Midwest.

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor:

- Tony Killeen T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Environment Heritage and Local Government and Communication Energy and Natural Resources with special responsibility for Environment and Energy, is available for

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interview and further comment on 0035387-2525304. Alternatively please contact Mark Dunphy of Dunphy Public Relations on 00353868534900 or media@dunphypr.com

- High-resolution image of Minister Killeen available on request

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